

Employee Training and General Performance Standards

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management works to ensure that people working with asbestos are properly trained and that individuals performing asbestos abatement comply with rules governing the work activity. These rules are designed to protect the individual employee performing asbestos abatement work and the general public that occupy the area or building in which the work occurs.

Why Regulate Asbestos?

Asbestos is a mineral that has been used in more than 3,000 different products over the last 100 years for its insulating, acoustical, and fire protective properties. Common products that contain asbestos are pipe insulation, floor and ceiling tile, spray-on insulation, boiler wrap insulation, and electrical appliances, such as toasters and hair dryers. Asbestos-containing materials are frequently encountered in a wide range of environments, including, but not limited to, industrial and commercial facilities, schools and universities, and residential properties.

Asbestos is actually the name of a group of minerals that share similar chemical and physical properties. The most common of these minerals are Chrysotile, Amosite, and Crocidolite. The primary characteristic that makes asbestos a concern is its ability to separate into microscopic needle-like fibers. Once these fibers become airborne (usually by disturbing the product in which they are contained), they are easily inhaled into the lungs. Once in the lungs, these needle-like fibers can penetrate the lung tissue and the lining that holds the lung in place (pleura). This begins the process that can eventually lead to one of the three diseases most commonly associated with asbestos:

- **Asbestosis**—A scarring and hardening of the lung tissue;
- **Lung Cancer**—Malignant tumor of the lung tissue; and
- **Mesothelioma**—A scarring or malignant tumor of the lung lining.

All of these diseases can lead to death. Exposure to asbestos is also associated with increased incidences of gastrointestinal cancer. Further, epidemiological studies indicate that the risk of lung cancer among exposed workers who smoke cigarettes is greatly increased over the risk of lung cancer among non-exposed smokers or exposed nonsmokers. Therefore, smoking among asbestos workers is strongly discouraged.



The key to preventing occupational illnesses/diseases involving asbestos is to initially recognize products that may contain asbestos and then train, protect, and equip employees to work with these products in a safe manner.

Who Is Exposed?

Nationwide, an estimated 1.3 million employees in construction and general industry potentially face significant asbestos exposure on the job. Heaviest exposures occur in the construction industry, particularly during building renovation or demolition activities where asbestos is disturbed or removed. Employees may also be exposed during custodial/maintenance activities in a building containing asbestos, during the manufacture of asbestos products (such as textiles, friction products, insulation, and other building materials), and during automotive brake and clutch repair work.

General Requirements

The Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration is responsible for the enforcement of asbestos regulations listed in Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Sections 1910.1001 and 1926.1101. IDEM's Office of Air Quality issues approvals to individuals performing asbestos-related work.

■ Approval of Asbestos Training Courses

In order for individuals performing asbestos-related work to become accredited, they must successfully complete a designated training course that is recognized or approved by the U.S. EPA or IDEM's Office of Air Quality. For the 32-hour asbestos abatement worker, 40-hour contractor/supervisor, 24-hour project designer, 24-hour inspector, and 16-hour management planner courses, Indiana course sponsors must submit an application and other specified materials to IDEM's Office of Air Quality and receive approval before they may teach the course in Indiana. Specifically, course sponsors must submit all course materials, instructors' credentials, and a completed application form with the appropriate fee.

When a course sponsor has satisfied Indiana's minimum requirements, it receives "Contingent Course Approval" and is able to provide asbestos-related training within the state of Indiana. Sponsors must then pass an on-site review of their course before receiving "Full Course Approval."

■ Accreditation of Workers

Asbestos abatement workers, supervisors, project designers, inspectors, and management planners must successfully complete the appropriate initial and refresher training requirements that are required by IDEM's Office of Air Quality, and become accredited before working in Indiana. Individuals who work as abatement workers, supervisors, project designers, building inspectors, or management planners must submit proof that they have attended and successfully completed their respective training courses. Asbestos inspectors, management planners, and project designers must also satisfy asbestos-related work experience requirements to become accredited and maintain accreditation to work in the state.

■ Licensing of Asbestos Abatement Contractors

Other than specified exempt licensed trade groups (e.g., electricians, mechanical contractors, plumbers, residential builders, or residential maintenance/alteration contractors), any individual or company within Indiana that is hired to remove or encapsulate friable asbestos on the premises of another must be licensed by IDEM's Office of Air Quality before engaging in any asbestos abatement activities. To become licensed, a contractor must have workers' compensation insurance and proof that all workers and supervisors have been accredited before receiving their annual licenses. The designated exempt licensed trade groups are allowed to remove or encapsulate friable asbestos materials without obtaining an asbestos abatement contractor's license provided the job they are performing is incidental to their primary license trade, and it does not exceed 260 linear feet or 160 square feet of friable asbestos-containing materials.

■ Processing of Asbestos Abatement Project Notifications

Contractors performing friable asbestos removal or encapsulation work in Indiana must provide project notifications indicating the starting and ending dates and other job-related information to IDEM's Office of Air Quality within a specified time frame. IDEM's Office of Air Quality requires project notification 10 days prior to any non-emergency asbestos abatement project exceeding 10 linear feet or 15 square feet, or both, of friable asbestos materials. A one-percent project notification fee must also be included. Emergency asbestos abatement projects must provide notification by phone, fax, or mail prior to starting the projects. Submitting the original written project notification and fee must follow up initial phone and fax notifications.

■ Compliance Investigations

Asbestos inspectors from IDEM's Office of Air Quality conduct on-site evaluations of the abatement activities of contractors and also respond to complaints or referrals involving improper work practices or procedures during asbestos abatement or disturbance activities.

Employer's Responsibilities

If your work involves asbestos-containing materials, it is important to recognize an employer's responsibilities under IOSHA concerning exposure monitoring, regulated areas, engineering controls and work practices, respiratory protection, protective clothing, hygiene facilities for employees, communication of the hazards associated with asbestos in construction activities, housekeeping, medical exams, and record keeping.

Building Owner's Responsibilities

- Building must be surveyed by an asbestos inspector.
- Builders must maintain asbestos-containing materials in a safe manner.
- Builders must have all employees appropriately trained.
- Builders must notify all contractors or parties who may contact or be exposed to asbestos-containing materials at your facility.

For more information on asbestos training or asbestos abatement activities, please contact IDEM's Office of Air Quality at (317) 233-3861 or (800) 451-6027, ext. 3-3861.